

Tackle your local government challenges

Five steps to positive change

Few people would disagree – local government organisations are facing the biggest challenges in their history.

Cuts to budgets are coming through on an unprecedented scale. Despite this, public expectations of the way services are delivered are rising all the time. No wonder when more and more of us want to be able to interact and transact with our local authority online.

But there is also a good deal of optimism and positivity around. And with good reason.

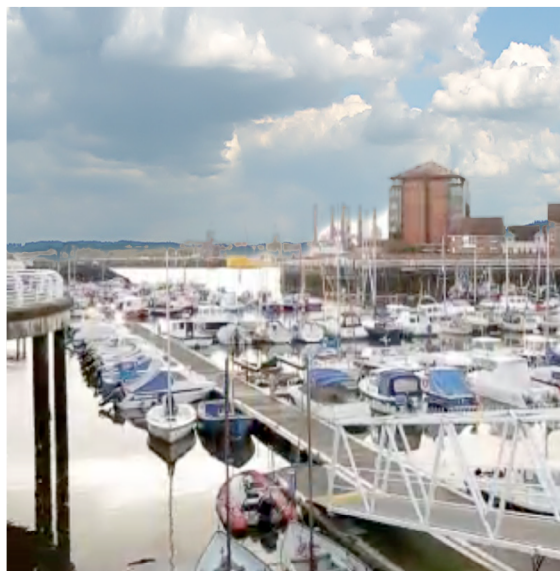
Many councils are already laying down plans to fundamentally change the way they work. We're hearing from more local government leaders who want to extend flexible working.

They're looking to share locations and infrastructure – both with other councils and services.

The motivation is to address major cost cutting goals – such as the need to spend less money on offices – and to give staff more time to work on improving citizen outcomes.

The big task for local government organisations is to find and implement these innovative ways to deliver new efficiencies. While at the same time, boost productivity in ways that will radically improve the way services are delivered to the public.

In this how-to guide, we suggest practical ways you can tackle these challenges and move forward.



Key local government challenges

Work with significantly **lower budgets**

Meet rising public expectations of service delivery

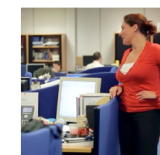
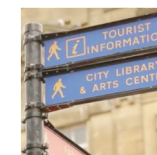
Enable more flexible working to **unlock new efficiencies**

“We have to do everything with less money. But it's no longer good enough to just do things cheaper. You've got to do it better, and in new ways.”

Tom Baker, Head of ICT,
Sunderland City Council

There is no simple solution to the challenges local authorities face today – but there are five broad areas you can focus on that will help you build solid foundations for your future strategy.

1	Reduce money you spend on offices	It's no surprise this issue has become top of the agenda if you're a local authority leader – with many buildings to look after, you probably have a huge property overhead . The good news is that introducing flexible and mobile working can significantly reduce your need for fixed office and desk space . We recommend a profiling programme that enables you to work out what your people do in a day to deliver a great experience for citizens. And based on that, who really needs access to an office and when. Typically, this information will enable you to considerably rationalise your property estate.
2	Boost productivity, reduce costs through flexible working	One sure way to boost productivity is to free up staff from unnecessary admin and travel . Our experience shows that enabling field based staff to work more flexibly – giving them access to your office based systems and records while they're on the move – can save multiple hours per staff member day . Consider how you can also use flexible working to reduce travel costs, and of course carbon emissions.
3	Simplify processes and spend more time on service delivery	Could you improve the way you deliver services to the citizen? One method is to focus on removing inefficient paper based processes . Your teams will be able to spend less time on admin and more time on citizen-facing activity. For staff working in the field, this means seeing more people a day. For office-based staff, it means more time to focus on activities and policies that have a direct influence on citizen outcomes .
4	Meet rising public expectations	Many local authorities have spent a lot of budget on programmes to improve access to services online. But what about dialogue? How does your community want to engage with you in a two way conversation? Some prefer the immediacy of face-to-face, while many others are moving to Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media. If the overall citizen experience is to improve, better all-round interaction via new processes is key . You can make an improvement here with a relatively simple implementation of new feedback mechanisms – be that through mobile data collection via staff delivering front line services, or by improving communication via social media channels in your contact centre.
5	Make sure you manage the cultural shift	We talk a lot about improving services for citizens. You also need to think about employees . Introducing new and better ways of working inevitably means managing a cultural transformation, but this doesn't need to be as daunting as it sounds. Think about how your people work today, how efficient new processes might change that, and how you will re-evaluate and measure their roles in a new, more citizen-focused world. The long-term aim should be to move performance metrics away from traditional factors like attendance, and focus them more on outcome .



Want to find out more?

Watch our Public Perspective videos where local government leaders talk about their biggest challenges and **see our experts** discuss today's local government challenges



Or contact us on **0845 8942710**